

LAOS

THE WASHINGTON POST

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## U.S. Planes Raid in Laos, Cambodia

From News Dispatches

More than 120 American planes bombed North Vietnamese supply trails in Laos and military targets in Cambodia after the cease-fire went into effect in Vietnam Sunday.

The Associated Press reported from Washington that the U.S. planes, flying from bases in Thailand and Guam, met relatively light anti-aircraft fire, and there were no reported U.S. losses.

A top State Department official, William Sullivan, confirmed the continued bombing of Laos, but said nothing of Cambodia.

In a television interview today Sullivan—a deputy assistant Secretary of State and former ambassador to Laos—said: "In the interim period between now and whenever there is a cease-fire in Laos we are continuing to provide air support to the Royal Laotian forces in resisting whatever Communist movements there are taking place."

~~last~~ week, Pentagon spokesman Jerry Friedheim held open the possibility that U.S. bombers would continue to hit North Vietnamese supply trails in Laos and military targets in Cambodia after the cease-fire in Vietnam became effective.

At the time, Friedheim said he could not go beyond the words of White House security adviser Henry A. Kissinger, the chief U.S. negotiator of the Vietnam cease-fire pact, that the United States has "full expectation that within a short period of time there will be a formal cease-fire in Laos" and a halt in the fighting in Cambodia as well.

Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma said last Friday that he expects a Laos cease-fire within about 15 days. The peace agreement worked out in Paris stipulates that "foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos," but it does not specify a date.

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### LAOS, From A1

In New Delhi Sunday, Souvanna repeated his hope for an early cease-fire and said he was counting on India to play an important role in restoring peace to his country.

The prince, who is on a three-day official visit to India, expressed his confidence in India as chairman of the International Control Commission in Laos, although he called for a strengthening of the peace-keeping body.

Cambodian President Lon Nol announced Sunday that his forces would cease all offensive operations by Monday—24 hours after the Vietnam cease-fire—to allow North Vietnamese units to withdraw from Cambodia.

The president said his forces would be ordered to protect the population and would continue to defend themselves if attacked, and he added that the suspension might be canceled if Communist attacks were sustained.

At the same time, Lon Nol called on Cambodia's allies to keep sufficient military forces in Southeast Asia "to dissuade potential aggressors."

The United States stepped up its troop withdrawal program in Vietnam to about 800 men for the first two days of the cease-fire, well above the average of 100 men per week for the past several weeks.

The Paris accord calls for a full withdrawal of U.S. military personnel in Vietnam—about 23,000 men—within 60 days.

U.S. officials in Saigon said, however, that some of the American servicemen now in Vietnam were going "west," meaning they are to be transferred to American bases in Thailand that are not affected by the cease-fire pact.

Officials have said that a sufficient number of U.S. fighting men will be kept in Thailand to deter any violations of the agreement.

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## ARMS TO CAMBODIA AND LAOS DEBATED

Pentagon Said to Feel Pacts  
Bar Help With the State  
Department Differing

By JOHN W. FINNEY  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2—A disagreement has reportedly broken out within the Nixon Administration over whether the recently concluded agreement for a cease-fire in Vietnam allows the United States to continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia.

Senate Democratic sources report that they have been informed by State Department officials that the Defense Department is being urged by the State Department and apparently by the White House office of Henry A. Kissinger, to continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia and not to withdraw any of the military aid personnel assigned to the two countries. The aid amounts to some \$500-million a year.

Directors of the military aid program in the Pentagon have reportedly questioned whether such continuation of military aid was permissible under the Vietnam peace agreement and are said to be demanding that any orders to continue the aid programs be put in writing by either the State Department or

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the White House.

The agreement is specific in restricting the military aid provided to the contending sides in South Vietnam. It provides that from the start of the cease-fire last Sunday, all military aid must be limited to replacing, on a one-for-one basis, equipment and armaments that have become worn out or destroyed.

But when it comes to military aid to Laos and Cambodia, the agreement is less specific and subject to varying interpretations within the Administration.

Article 20 of the agreement, dealing with Cambodia and Laos, provides in Section A that all parties "shall strictly respect" the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos—agreements that basically established the independence and neutrality of the two nations.

Section B of Article 20 goes on to provide: "Foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos, totally withdraw from and refrain from reintroducing into these two countries troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material."

### Pentagon Cites on Section

It is Section B that Defense Department officials cite in questioning whether a continuation of the military aid programs is permissible under the agreement.

To Defense Department officials, the clear intent of this section is to cut off military aid to the two nations, although no precise deadline is set for the termination.

However, State Department officials, in arguing that continued military aid is permissible, cite Section A of the article, which calls on all parties to respect the 1954 and 1962 Geneva accords. They note that both the 1954 Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Agreements on Laos permit each country to request and receive military aid needed for self-defense.

Therefore, State Department officials contend, the Vietnam cease-fire agreement permits military aid to be continued if requested by the governments in Laos and Cambodia. Describing Section B as redundant, they said they were governed by Section A.

The present Department officials said, is to

continue military aid to Laos and Cambodia unless such aid is specifically prohibited in any truce agreements worked out by the contending factions in the two countries.

The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said in an interview that he would advocate "a cut-off of military aid to Laos and Cambodia as soon as a cease-fire is reached and a truce is arranged."

In the defense budget submitted to Congress earlier this week, the Administration asked for \$2.1-billion in military aid for South Vietnam and Laos in the fiscal year beginning July 1, with about a sixth of the total for Laos. Military aid for Cambodia is handled in separate legislation that has not yet been submitted to Congress.

### Mansfield Favors Cut-Off

For the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, the Defense Department has scheduled \$49-million in military aid for Laos plus \$50-million in "supporting assistance," an indirect form of military aid used to help a nation carry a heavy defense budget.

For Cambodia, the Defense Department has proposed \$209.5-million in military aid in the current fiscal year, plus \$75-million in supporting assistance.

Because of a stalemate that developed in the last congress on foreign aid legislation, however, foreign aid for Cambodia and other countries is being provided under a continuing resolution, with spending at basically last year's rates. That continuing resolution expires at the end of this month.

The United States maintains a military mission of more than 500 in Laos.

In Cambodia, where the United States resumed military aid in 1970 after the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as chief of state, there is a 50-man "military equipment delivery team," that is not supposed to give military advice to the Cambodians.

### U.S. Air Strikes in Laos

HONOLULU, Feb. 2 (UPI)—The Office of the Commander of United States forces in the Pacific said today that American aircraft continued bombing missions in Laos for the fifth straight day.

A three-line announcement said only that United States aircraft, including B-52's, continued operations over Laos at government.

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THE EVENING STAR

PAGE 1

# U.S. Puts 'Advisers' in Cambodia

By Tammy Arbuckle  
Star-News Special Correspondent

SVAY RIENG, Cambodia — The United States has launched a program, staffed by American personnel in the Cambodian countryside, with para-military overtones and the potential for a U.S.-run private army on the Laos model.

The program has 10

Americans in it, stationed semi-permanently in province capitals such as Svay Rieng, Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kampot and others. The operation was launched two months ago, although the first group of five Americans arrived in Phnom Penh in April.

They moved into the countryside in early May and the second group of five followed a few weeks later.

The ceiling of 200 American Embassy and related personnel was not exceeded as cuts were made in personnel in other departments to make room for the new program.

At least two of the Americans were engaged previously in the Laos paramilitary program.

THE PRESENT program is supported by China Air-

lines, of which Air America, the private company used in the Laos operation, is a subsidiary. The pilots are in many cases the same men who flew in Laos, providing support for American-run teams in enemy-held areas. These Americans expect the same situation to evolve here in Cambodia.

China Airlines is opening a new office in downtown Phnom Penh. American

the field are supplied with radio equipment giving direct contact with U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh and capable of contacting air support and local guerrilla teams. Cambodian military sources here say a U.S. official in Svay Rieng help with 14 three-man teams of "Black Commandos."

A U.S. official here receives and collates radioed

information from the teams, and suggests places where the teams might operate. Each team leader has a Cambodian cover name, similar to the Laos operating system.

The teams, besides gathering information, engage in reportedly successful raids — usually rocket attacks on trucks passing down Viet Cong supply

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routes 10 miles west and seven miles east of this three-street town, the only Cambodian government holdout in Cambodia's Parrots Beak area close South Vietnam's border. The teams also call in air and artillery fire on the Viet Cong supply routes.

THE "BLACK Commandos" are mostly Cambodia border smugglers who know the area well. The teams were recruited by Cambodian Col. Mok Cheay and the United States only stepped in to develop them — a move reminiscent of the U.S. development of Laos village defense groups in 1965 which later became private army regiments with U.S. commanders.

The Americans use call signs such as "Kipper," "Anthill" and "Easter Bunny," and airstrips have site numbers because Air America pilots can't handle Cambodian names, a system that was used in Laos too.

There are Cambodian nationals in U.S. employ who handle communications and reporting in more dangerous areas under fire and coordinate local air strikes. These Cambodians correspond to Laos operational assistants. The Air America helicopters with U.S. officials do appear at hotspots and have come under fire, according to U.S. and Cambodian sources who give specific dates, times and places.

Although the program is badly needed by the tactically impoverished Cambodians, the U.S. Embassy appears to be trying to keep it secret.

A U.S. official here denied running teams or being involved in military matters. He said his mission was military, political and economic reporting to the embassy in Phnom Penh. A top U.S. Embassy official said the

same, asserting that Americans in the field were reporting to the political-military section of the Phnom Penh embassy. The official claimed Americans in the field are "an expansion of an existing program" to keep the embassy informed of Cambodian countryside developments, but further inquiry reveals it's been a new operation.

THE OFFICIAL admitted previous field reporting was confined to an occasional flight by members of the embassy's military-political section about once a month and sometimes as seldom as once in three months.

The embassy does not say where the money for the program, including some of the new China Airlines contracts is coming from. It claims Americans in the countryside are members of the State Department. The embassy, at least until questioned by this correspondent, has never made a public announcement of the program. Congressional investigators have been here making specific inquiries about such activities, but U.S. officials concede they were not informed of plans for the program. The first five Americans in the program arrived 10 days after the investigator's departure.

Meanwhile, a U.S. official in Svay Rieng conceded the enemy undoubtedly knew of the American presence in countryside and there was a possibility of grenade attack. They expressed surprise there had been no embassy statement of this U.S. presence.

"It can't be hidden. We stick out like a sore thumb," he said, noting he was the only American in this tiny Communist-surrounded town. U.S. officials admit local air support has been expanded following new China Airlines contracts.

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# U.S. Admits Secret Forays

By Orr Kelly  
Star-News Staff Writer

The Pentagon has disclosed yet another hidden chapter in the Indochina war — six years of secret military intelligence missions across the borders into Laos and Cambodia.

Pentagon press spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim revealed yesterday that 55 Americans lost their lives in the forays into Laos between the fall of 1965 and February 1971 and another 26 were killed in Cambodia between 1967 and June 1970. But the men's families were told they died in South Vietnam.

Sen. Harold Hughes, D-Iowa, whose questions brought to light last week a secret 14-month B52 bombing campaign against Cambodia, said the new admission "strips away another layer of deceit."

Friedheim insisted that the covert intelligence operations were legal even though the Cooper-Church amendment of December 1969 prohibited use of American ground combat forces in Thailand and Laos and a similar amendment in January 1971 prohibited use of such forces in Cambodia.

THE SECRET intelligence operations in Cambodia ended before the second Cooper-Church restriction was approved, according to Friedheim. But the operations into Laos continued for more than a year after the first stricture was approved.

Neither those who went into Cambodia nor those who crossed into Laos were considered ground combat forces, Friedheim said.

"It was not their purpose obviously to engage in ground combat: It was their purpose to operate covertly and undisclosed and to gather information and not to get in a fight if they could avoid it. Obviously, some of them came into contact with enemy forces and there were some casualties," he

told newsmen at the Pentagon.

The existence of the intelligence operations had previously been reported in the press but the Pentagon always refused to discuss the activities. Friedheim said the decision to discuss the operations now was made in order to correct a summary of Southeast Asian operations supplied last month to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

IT WAS disclosed last week that statistics sent to the committee had inaccurately reported more than 3,600 B52 raids as having taken place in South Vietnam rather than in Cambodia.

In further checking the summary, Friedheim said, it was found on Monday that the casualties from the forays across the borders had been listed in these statistics as having occurred in South Vietnam. Then the decision was made to reveal the true facts.

Most of the men involved in the secret forays were members of the Army's Special Forces, although a few may have been Marines and Air Force men, Friedheim said.

Typically, two or three Americans would cross the border, either on foot or by helicopter, with a small force of South Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians or

Montagnard tribesmen. They would spy on enemy base camps and other facilities near the borders and also check on damage caused by the secret B52 bombing raids.

Their operations were directed out of a secret headquarters in Saigon known as MACSOG — for Military Advisory Command Special Operations Group. Pentagon officials said MACSOG was essentially a military operation and was not directly connected with covert activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.

DEFENSE Secretary James R. Schlesinger, talking to reporters after testifying on Capitol Hill yesterday, strongly defended the right of the government to provide a "cover" for secret operations so they will not be publicly divulged.

"The U.S. government," he said, "must indeed have those kinds of operations for diplomatic and military objectives — whether or not one disagrees with this particular decision."

He likened the secret B52 bombing raids to the secret decision to build the atomic bomb, the U2 flights over

Russia in the late 1950s and the decision to invade French North Africa in 1942 even though the United States was not at war with France.

Schlesinger also insisted there had been no usurpation of civilian authority by the military — as Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield was reported to have charged.

"The military," Schlesinger said, "have followed meticulously the orders given to them by the civilian authorities. The orders have come down from the top."

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## The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Tuesday, July 31, 1973 B13

# Hill to Be Told of More Falsified Data

By Jack Anderson

The Pentagon has now admitted falsifying reports to cover up the bombing of Cambodia before the 1970 invasion. Senate witnesses are prepared to testify, however, that both the bombing and the falsifying continued after the invasion.

The Pentagon has also admitted falsifying the casualty reports to cover up the deaths of 102 Americans in Cambodia and Laos on secret intelligence-gathering missions.

It has taken the Pentagon more than two years to get around to admitting the truth about these missions. We reported on March 30, 1971, that "MACSOG teams, composed of U.S. special forces and South Vietnamese rangers, have made several raids into both countries. The secret messages referred to the Cambodian raids by the code name 'Salem House' and identified the Laos incursions as 'Prairie Fire'...

"A secret summary of the MACSOG casualties alone, dated March 6, 1970, listed 77 Americans killed and 37 missing in Laos," our story continued. "Scores more were lost on clandestine missions after March, but we have been unable to get the secret figures."

We were assailed by the Pentagon for this report at the same time that the Justice De-

partment conducted a grand jury investigation to discover our Pentagon sources. Now the Pentagon has admitted its spokesman lied, and we told the truth.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, meanwhile, will receive sworn testimony that a hush-hush "Special Operations Group" directed the reconnaissance missions into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam.

SOG operated out of an old office building in Saigon. The entrance was marked by a skull topped with a green beret. The group, which was run by the Central Intelligence Agency, maintained three "command and control" centers in Vietnam.

Senate witnesses will also tell about the secret operations in Cambodia and Laos of the "Blackbirds," as the air squadrons were known because of their lack of identifying markings. The National Security Council ordered the secrecy cloak on the raids for diplomatic reasons.

Senate sources tell us that upcoming testimony will also focus on the "phantom command" which operated outside of normal military channels. These same sources report that bases are now being set up in Thailand and the Philippines to train Cambodian forces under U.S. auspices.

**Presidential Spending:** The nearly \$2 million in federal funds which was squandered on President Nixon's homes in San Clemente and Key Biscayne represents only a portion of the public's contribution. When all the moneys are counted, the total is likely to climb over \$3 million.

Despite an intense cover-up effort on the part of the White House, for example, we have uncovered several major expenditures which are yet unreported. They include:

- A \$129,000 instrument landing system which the Navy purchased for the El Toro Marine base, located 30 miles north of San Clemente, to enable the presidential jet to land there in inclement weather. The system was installed and is maintained by the Federal Aviation Administration.

- A \$400,000 helipad which was built at Key Biscayne by the Army engineers. The helipad is a standard item, but it was installed in such a way that it juts into the waters of Biscayne Bay. A special foundation, therefore, had to be built.

- A \$100,000 special study, financed by the taxpayers of California, to determine the

feasibility of relocating the Santa Fe railroad tracks that run between the President's home and the Pacific Ocean. Although he has pared the state welfare budget to the bone, Gov. Ronald Reagan apparently had no qualms about charging the study to the California Department of Parks and Recreation. State officials subsequently learned that the Santa Fe railroad had already conducted a similar study and had concluded that the project would be too expensive. The \$100,000, therefore, was never spent.

**Footnote:** The official portion of the Western White House is located at the Coast Guard's Loran station, which is adjacent to the San Clemente residence. According to our sources, the Coast Guard "went broke" in support of the White House has refused to release the exact figures. The taxpayers also footed the bill for a shark net and underwater sensor devices around Key Biscayne, but the costs of these, too, have apparently been declared state secrets.

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WASHINGTON STAR-NEWS  
Washington, D. C., Tuesday, July 31, 1973

# CIA Cambodia Effort Thinly Veiled

By Tammy Arbuckle  
Star-News Special Correspondent

**PHNOM PENH**—The official explanation that 10 Central Intelligence Agency operatives based in the Cambodian countryside are solely performing a reporting function plus some overseeing of the end use of military equipment raises more questions than it answers.

The official statements don't satisfactorily explain why CIA officials and not military equipment delivery team officials are issuing radios to Cambodian teams in Svay Rieng and raise the question of funding for these radios.

Not do official explanation

## Interpretation

tions indicate how the official concerned is involved in organizing the teams and suggesting areas where these teams should work and what they should be looking for. Cambodian military sources also say it was an American idea to give code names to team leaders for use on the radios.

The U.S. official in Svay Rieng lives in a small villa in considerable discomfort, its sandy yard patrolled night and day by armed guards supplied by the local Cambodian commander.

THE VILLA doubles as

office and radio room as well as living quarters and is staffed by three Cambodians in American employ. Who pays the Cambodians' salary? These men were working in the villa on documents relating to the teams' operation. If these teams are run by local Cambodians as claimed, one would expect such work to be done in the local commander's office.

In nearby Prey Vieng, which was under attack, a Cambodian lieutenant who operates radio equipment also is in American employ. The U.S. official from Svay Rieng flew into Prey Vieng while it was under artillery

and infantry attack. This reporter was not allowed to accompany the official on instructions of the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh so it was not possible to see what the "reporting" U.S. official did.

U.S. Embassy officials here are adamant that press will not travel on embassy air transport on a space available basis, a situation which means U.S. officials in the field could be doing many things in contravention of congressional intentions without the knowledge of the press or Congress.

MANY SMALLER towns

and military areas of Cambodia are not reachable by an commercial transport. This lack of press scrutiny by withholding the only means of transport was a factor in U.S. involvement in Laos reaching a highly developed stage.

One explanation given this correspondent was that there has been "slippage." It was said an American official all alone amongst local Cambodian officials is asked for many things, transport, air support, etc., and sometimes in order to foster good local relations and through warmth of personal relations the American official can be misled

into becoming more involved than he should.

Sources said these agents had been specifically briefed on avoiding this at Phnom Penh before going into the field. Well-informed sources make it clear team involvement was not a temporary aberration by the official in Svay Rieng.

Teams scattered throughout Cambodia are run from the country's provincial capitals. Other well-informed sources said the teams are known as MRRPS (Middle range reconnaissance patrols) or "Merps." The "Black Commandos" in Svay Rieng is merely a local name for the Merps. Merps were described by one source as being similar to the LRRPS or "Lerps" in South Vietnam, the long range reconnaissance patrols there, but the Cambodians are called Merps because "Cambodians don't go very far."

THE OFFICIAL explanation linking U.S. involvement to the end use of equipment given by U.S. officials sounds as if it was tacked onto a cover story to account for U.S. officials providing radios in Svay Rieng. In another case where an American was photographed giving out radios, it was claimed he was accidentally aboard a helicopter carrying radios which were already Cambodian property under the U.S. military aid program.

Based on sources in Phnom Penh and what this correspondent saw and heard in Svay Rieng it seems we now have a Central Intelligence Agency operation in a twilight zone that borders on intelligence-gathering and paramilitary activity.

But the bitter lesson of Laos is plain. In Laos in the mid-1960s the U.S. had trail-watching teams monitoring North Vietnamese traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail and in other areas. These teams were drawn from the Auxiliary Defense Corps (ADC), a local militia; they were not very good.

LAOS

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# Laos Groups Ready to Sign Peace Accord

VIENTIANE, Laos, July 29 (AP)—The Communist Pathet Lao announced Sunday a political and military agreement with Premier Souvanna Phouma that will establish a provisional government divided equally between Communists and non-Communists.

Sources said the agreement provides for geographical zones of control, with the Communist zone encompassing about 80 per cent of the country. That 80 per cent, however, contains only about a third of the population.

The settlement was announced in general terms at the headquarters of the 50-man Pathet Lao mission in Vientiane and was confirmed by royal Laotian and U.S. sources.

Details of the agreement were thrashed out in five months of negotiations, and sources said it would be signed officially this week by neutralist Prince Souvanna and his Communist half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong.

Souvanna will remain premier, while Souphanouvong will be senior deputy premier.

The agreement stipulates that the United States will dismantle its CIA force in Laos and the bases at which Laotian regular and irregular forces were trained, equipped and based.

There are now about 1,200 Americans in Laos, 400 of whom are involved in military activities. It is estimated the agreement will cut the number of Americans to about 600, most of them in economic and social aid and the foreign service. Perhaps 30 military attaches will remain.

The agreement also calls for the withdrawal within 80 days of the signing of all "foreign troops," including more than 17,000 Thai mercenaries fighting for the Vientiane government. However, the accord does not mention North Vietnamese troops by name. U.S. sources estimate 60,000 North Vietnamese troops are in Laos, most of them along the Ho Chi Minh trail in eastern Laos bordering South Vietnam.

Sources said it appeared doubtful that the North Vietnamese, who maintain a vital interest in South Vietnam, would pull out, particularly since the agreement is written so as not to embarrass them. The North Vietnamese have never acknowledged having troops in Laos, and the Laotian army would be too weak to drive them out.

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Souvanna was reported to be in Luang Prabang, the royal capital 130 miles northeast of this administrative center, informing King Savang Vatthana of the details of the agreement.

The settlement was seen as a bright spot in an otherwise dismal Indochina picture that includes intensified fighting in South Vietnam and Communist-led forces closing on the Cambodian capital.

Reliable diplomatic sources said the Laotian agreement contains these other key provisions:

- There will be 12 ministries, with the Pathet Lao holding five, the Lao government five and so-called neutralists two. The ministries of foreign affairs, economy and planning, public works, religious affairs and information will be given to the Pathet

Laos, while the royal government will control the ministries of defense, interior, finance, education and health. Neutralists will handle the ministry of justice and the postal service.

Laos, while the royal government will control the ministries of defense, interior, finance, education and health. Neutralists will handle the ministry of justice and the postal service.

The two "neutralists" in the Cabinet are actually split between the two sides. One is from Communist headquarters at Sam Neua and the other from Souvanna's headquarters in Vientiane.

- The new government will be called the Provisional National Union Government. It will include a National Political Consultative Council to carry out the provisions of the agreement and to handle affairs of state until a permanent government is established. The provisional government and the council will organize free elections for the National Assembly.

- There will be 26 inspection sites across Laos from

- The International Control Commission, the original Indochina truce supervisors, who continue to operate in Laos and with representatives of India, Poland and Canada, will have six additional mobile teams.

- Both the administrative capital of Vientiane and the royal capital of Luang Prabang will be neutralized.

Communist demands they be allowed to de, three battalions of infantry each city was one of the stumbling blocks to reaching a settlement. The sources said they did not know how this issue was resolved.

The right-wing faction of the royal Laotian government was reported by diplomatic sources

to be unhappy with concessions made to the Pathet Lao.

The official signing requires the immediate honoring of an agreement concluded last Feb. 21. That agreement brought a cease-fire to Laos and called for the restoration of peace and reconciliation between the Vientiane government of Prince Souvanna and the so-called "patriotic forces" of the Communists.

The "patriotic forces" include mainly the Pathet Lao, but also some formerly neutralist forces.

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Vietnam

# U.S. Developing Options for Hanoi Threat in South

By George Sherman  
Star-News Staff Writer

The United States is hoping by use of stern words and startling statistics to prevent a big new Hanoi offensive in South Vietnam which U.S. intelligence feels could begin in the next six weeks.

So serious is the threat that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has ordered Pentagon and State Department officials to draw up options outlining possible American responses to be studied by the top crisis-planning group of the administration, the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG).

Well-placed officials acknowledge they are deeply worried that North Vietnam may "misinterpret the domestic difficulties" of the President and the congressional restrictions against intervention.

**THEY HOPE** that Nixon's successful mobilization of U.S. forces last week for the Middle East, plus the stern diplomatic note to Hanoi last week and a firm public State Department warning this week, will convince Hanoi that the United States can still act in a crisis.

Officials cite the following statistics to show just how real the Hanoi threat has become over the last two months:

● North Vietnam has established 12 airfields in Communist-held territory in the South. Some are protected by high-flying SA2 and shoulder-fired SA7 ground-to-air missiles which proved so effective in the October Middle East war. At the same time, intelligence shows that a number of MIG 21 fighter squadrons

have been moved from the northern part of North Vietnam to areas just above the Demilitarized Zone. They are thus within easy reach of the Communist base at Khe Sanh — only 420 miles from Saigon.

● On the ground, the Communists today have 40,000 more troops in the South than at the time just before the big Eastern offensive of April 1972.

All told, Communist forces at the battalion level are 180,000, including about 25,000 Viet Cong and 165,000 North Vietnamese regulars. Another 90,000 Communist support and logistical forces are in sanctuaries and along supply routes between North and South.

● North Vietnam now has an estimated 550 tanks in the South, equal to the number available for the 1972 offensive. In addition, there are another 200 pieces of armor, including armored personnel carriers and self-propelled artillery pieces.

● In the last two months, with the onset of the dry season at the southern end of the supply trails, infiltration has reached a total of 20,000 men, with bus loads still on the way down the Ho Chi Minh Trail through southern Laos.

● Since the Jan. 27 cease-fire, North Vietnam has infiltrated a total of 70,000 men into the South in violation of the Paris accords, allowing a large replacement of tired and demoralized troops.

While these statistics are lower than those cited by South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu in a speech yesterday, they point to Thieu's general conclusion that an offensive

is imminent. Whether he would have to call for American air support, said Thieu, "depends on how we can deal with the attack."

But a spate of bitter articles in the North Vietnamese press, especially one about Nixon's weakened "position in defeat" due to the Watergate scandals, suggests action may be in the offing.

No consensus exists about where or how the Communists may strike. But one line of intelligence thinking suggests an initial "probe" or a so-called "high point" within six weeks aimed at grabbing badly needed rice from the new South Vietnamese harvest.

According to U.S. intelligence, prisoners and defectors are telling of the serious rice shortage among Communist forces after the long rainy season.

**THE LARGER** offensive, officials say, could develop in two separate ways:

● A drive out of Tay Ninh to take over Tay Ninh City, as the provincial capital of "Liberated South Vietnam," and then down the "Saigon corridor" toward the South Vietnamese capital itself.

● A move farther north across the Annamite Mountains, onto the coastal plain, and then against the old imperial capital of Hue. Such an onslaught would cut South Vietnam in two.

According to U.S. officials, military aid since the cease-fire has been strictly limited by the replacement rules of the Paris peace accords. Only about 100 tanks and no more than 50 aircraft have been supplied.

At present, the United States has 6,000 official personnel in South Vietnam — only 225 of them in uniform, according to Pentagon sources. Of those, 160 are Marine guards for the Saigon embassy and 50 are in the defense attaché's office. Fifteen more are assigned to the four-party joint military team of the cease-fire accords.

No American "advisers" are with South Vietnamese forces, Pentagon officials say. The remainder of the 6,000 Americans include 3,000 technicians on defense contracts to maintain equipment, 1,000 "administrators" of the military aid program, and 1,800 civilian personnel who are either personnel who are either with the State Department or are economic aid officials.

The commander of U.S. Air Force operations in the Pacific was quoted yesterday as saying American warplanes may resume bombing missions in Indochina in the event of a new Communist offensive.

"Now that we are not actually dropping bombs (in Indochina), we must maintain our capability to resume such action if we have to," Gen. John W. Vogt Jr. said in an interview with the Pacific Stars and Stripes.

"The whole idea of retaining ... units in Thailand and the control structure and headquarters in Nakhon Phanom (a U.S. air base in Thailand) is to be ready in case the enemy miscalculates and decides he wants to resume on a massive scale," Vogt was quoted as saying.

He said that while U.S. planes were no longer bombing, "we are flying reconnaissance missions, and it is conceivable that our crews could be shot up. So the commands down there on the line, so to speak, can't relax their vigil too much."

Vietnam

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## North Vietnam Said to Add 70,000 Men to Its Forces in the South

By DAVID BINDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24 —

American intelligence officials report that North Vietnam has moved more than 70,000 fighting men, 400 tanks and more than 200 artillery pieces into South Vietnam since the cease-fire nine months ago.

Additionally, these sources said, the North Vietnamese army has moved 15 anti-aircraft artillery regiments to the South, has nearly completed a new all-weather highway south to Tay Ninh Province and has rebuilt 12 airfields along the hilly western perimeter of South Vietnam.

The officials said these improvements give North Vietnam the greatest attack potential in the South since the Communists launched an offensive in March, 1972.

### Air Power the Difference

The difference between the 1972 situation and that of today, the intelligence community has concluded, is that North Vietnam does not necessarily face heavy opposition from United States air power this time.

The bolstering of Communist forces in South Vietnam has continued unabated since the cease-fire of Jan. 28, the officials said, adding that it was their understanding that there had been a fairly steady flow. According to informants in Saigon, the bulk of the 70,000 troops was infiltrated in the period immediately after January, when there were said to be about 200,000 North Vietnamese troops in place in South Vietnam.

Most of the troops and matériel were considered only nominally a violation of the truce, since they came by way of Laos before there was a peace agreement there and be-



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An all-weather road from North Vietnam (1) south to Tay Ninh Province (2) has been completed. Some U.S. aides expect Communist drives to coast between Hai Van pass (3) and Nha Trang (4).

cause no international control system was functioning.

These officials have insisted that neither the Nixon Administration nor the Saigon Government "cheated" by adding to the South Vietnamese arsenal, although Saigon's inventory of weapons has been kept at the same level that it was at the time of the cease-fire.

The current American intelligence estimate is that Hanoi can now count on a force of 270,000 North Vietnamese regular troops in South Vietnam, plus 70,000 to 80,000 Vietcong troops. The South Vietnamese

regular forces total about 375,000.

The Nixon Administration has reportedly become concerned about the Communist build-up less because it represents a violation of the cease-fire than because of its potential for a new outbreak of heavy fighting.

A sharp debate is going on among American national security officials about the significance of the North Vietnamese moves.

One group is arguing that the aim is to protect Communist enclaves and base areas in the South from incursions, by the South Vietnamese to provide a base for "the political struggle" in the countryside and to keep options open for larger operations.

These observers also believe that the new all-weather highway system, which includes roads traversing the north-south supply routes, also has a primarily political purpose for extending Communist control in the countryside of South Vietnam.

The other group in the Administration, according to knowledgeable officials, argues that North Vietnam is preparing major ground actions, possibly with support from its Il-yushin-28 bombers, and MIG-17, 19 and 21 fighters.

### Attack Envisioned

The officials, who expect an offensive in the dry season from late December to late February, talk in terms of drives to the coast in the region between Hai Van pass and Nha Trang, of pushes against strong-points like Kontum and Pleiku, of an effort to retake the former capital of Hue and of renewed rocket attacks on Saigon itself.

Their reasoning is based in part on analysis of what would appear to be a fundamental policy difference between Le

Duan, the first secretary of North Vietnam's ruling Workers' party, and his deputy, Truong Chinh.

Le Duan made his reputation as a Communist leader in South Vietnam in the mid-nineteen-fifties and has advocated armed struggle in the South ever since, it was said here.

### Hardening of Opinions

Truong Chinh was in North Vietnam, where he had been designated as Ho Chi Minh's successor until his strong-arm methods of agrarian reform caused a peasant uprising in 1956. He was then demoted, but he has advocated stress on completion of Communist revolution in North Vietnam throughout his career.

Washington intelligence officials believe the rivalry between Le Duan and Truong Chinh has increasingly polarized opinion in the North Vietnamese party's Politburo, with those around Le Duan demanding renewed military action in the South and those around Truong Chinh insisting that reconstruction of North Vietnam be given priority.

American intelligence officials believe two outside factors play strong, perhaps decisive roles in the thinking of the Hanoi leaders.

One is the growing strength of Saigon's armed forces, which would make an early northern offensive more desirable than a year-long pause. The other is the possibility that President Nixon would order American air support, including renewed bombing of North Vietnam, in the event of an outbreak of major fighting in the South.

Not even American intelligence officials are certain Mr. Nixon would reach a situation.